

HONGKONG, THURSDAY, JANUARY 1, 1891.

British rights and avenge the cruel murder of British subjects, to consult Mr. McLEAVY BROWN, of the Chinese Customs Service-office. His Excellency says he thought that Mr. McLEAVY BROWN—who, by the way, is the Commissioner in charge of that amusing fiction, known as the Kowloon branch of the Chinese Customs—"probably knew the locality well and would be able to give me valuable information." Why this gentleman, because he happens to be an employé of the Chinese Customs, should be supposed to know anything whatever about Mendocino Island and the surrounding district, or what use such knowledge would have been to the commander of a British gunboat in search of Chinese pirates, has not existed anywhere but in his Excellency's muddled imagination, no explanation has been forthcoming, nor is any sensible explanation possible. If a qualified pilot or guide were actually required for the avenging gunboat, we should have thought that common-sense would at once have suggested the chief officer of the *Namoi*, who had only just returned from the scene of operations and whose special knowledge of the piracy would no doubt have been useful. It is scarcely too much to believe that his Excellency was under some sort of impression that the Commissioner of Customs had the power and would probably transform for the nonce one of the Chinese revenue cruisers into a pirate catcher, to oblige the Hong Kong Government; but if that was the case, he had to face a bitter disappointment. Mr. McLEAVY BROWN expressed his willingness to assist the Hong Kong Government, to the extent of his authority, and promised Captain Stewart of the Chinese revenue cruiser *Kaipan* to accompany the gunboat; if the Commodore had declined, and after some correspondence had returned that this gentleman should

It may possibly be not be apparent to Mr. FRANCIS FLEMING nor to Commodore CHURCH, but it must nevertheless be clearly evident to everybody else acquainted with the past record of Chinese pirates in these waters, that the escape of the *Namoa* marauders was very greatly facilitated by the incomprehensible delay in sending an armed vessel in pursuit. We don't pretend to know for an absolute certainty what means were adopted by the pirates in getting clear off with their plunder and leaving no trace behind, but there were certain circumstances connected with the seizure and loading of the *Namoa* from which some fair inferences may be drawn. That the piracy was planned in this colony admits of little doubt; we have it in evidence that some of the pirates, including the leader of the gang, are well known Hongkong gook-birds; and an equally important fact is that the four junks employed in getting away with the spoil from the steamer were recognised to be Hongkong fishing junks. Now, taking all these things into consideration, and remembering the season of the year and the locality in which the piracy was consummated, certain probabilities are forcibly suggested. As already pointed out, the pirates had a clear start of at least thirty-six hours; but it may be regarded as certain that their arrangements were made on an expected immunity from active pursuit of not more than twelve hours. They would estimate and reasonably enough, that the *Namoa* would reach Hongkong about 3 o'clock on the morning of the 11th, and that shortly after daylight, all the available gunboats in harbour would be on their track. What plans, therefore, would they be likely to adopt in order to escape from what they were justified in believing would be a thoroughly organised and powerful body of pursuers? Has anybody belonging

"AS OTHERS SEE US."

Oh, wad some power the gifle gie us
To see oursel's as others see us—

is one of the happiest efforts of ROBERT BURNS' keen insight into the weakness of erring humanity, as there cannot now be the remotest doubt that if the poet's appeal could be generally realised, the world would be a better place to live in and the dwellers on this terrestrial globe a happier family than actually there is the case. Hongkong is in itself admittedly a marvellous monument of British enterprise and prosperity and holds no unimportant place as a factor in Far Eastern politics; but its true political and importance, both commercially and politically, have been greatly exaggerated and are but indifferently understood by the outside world, mainly owing to the foolish and irresponsible cackling of a crowd of light-headed and self-seeking

would be a more wholesome note to strike at the approaching jubilation." Our respon-

OUR Shungbai morning contemporary reports that the Nippon Yusen Kaisha are extending

As regards the administration of Justice Hong Kong is not now worse off than Russia after the revolution, and the political situation is not much better. Wang, who had returned from a debauch with three or four Chinese clothes, and in explanation stated that it came from some one whom they had beaten, but did not know. At the same time a Sergeant in the regiment was found murdered, and the three soldiers were tried, convicted, and shot within twenty-four hours. The next day another soldier surrendered as the murderer.

OF all the parasites who cling to, and gain a precarious existence by virtue of the corruption which attains to the administration of law in the 17th century, none are so vile and contemptible as the ordinary legal adviser. And why in these days of keen commercial competition one, and one branch only, of all trades should be privileged to put its own exorbitant price upon an article that it tends to sell, any more than a butcher or a baker, is a thing which a latter day legislator should not seek to have re-frused at all. In all truth we have received far better value for our money when an Irish peasant woman has roused us our linen shirt, and slashed and fiddled it, than we have received from our legal adviser, who saves the mark—who charges a fee of fifty guineas for drawing out a document the value of which is ungrammatical and worthless for the purpose for which it was originally drafted, but had actually to be reconstructed. A conviction for highway robbery carries with it certain heavy penalties and why, the thing, the legal highwayman, who is a thousand times more contemptible, should be allowed to sit in a dingy room and have not only the countenance but the protection of the rotten ragged law and go down with a mystery that could only be solved by a lawyer, who says that "every man has his day" and we suppose those of the king and gown will have theirs for a little time longer, anyhow. In Australia, which is *passim* excellent, the land of freedom, the common wisdom of the law, all others, and baristers to wit, have had to fall back on traditionalism to defer a measure that was—on the point of becoming law—about to be decreed and to be the basis of the great privilege of exorbitant charging—thus by collusion with the law officers of a despotic government they deflected for a time—and for a time only! the ends of commerce and justice.

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